

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Economic Sabotage by Dockworkers
at Belawan, Sumatra

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December 1950 - Early January 1951

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1. As a result of its campaign of economic sabotage, the Communist-dominated Dock Workers' Union in Belawan, Sumatra has aroused considerable indignation. Its "slowdown" policy has been chiefly responsible for keeping the price level of rice at rps. 2.50 per kilo, twice the Government pegged price. The union leaders are rumored to be paid agents of those Chinese and Dutch merchants whose political and economic interests are best served by keeping the public in a state of unrest.
2. At least a hundred tons of vegetables destined for Malaya recently perished at Belawan, while thousands of tons rotted in the vegetable gardens of Brastagi. In Medan cabbage dropped to an all-time low of 10 cents per kilo. For a time, it was free to anyone taking the trouble to gather it in the Brastagi Hills. A vegetable exporter estimated the loss at rps. 1,000,000. According to the nationalist paper, Mimbar Umum, the total losses sustained by the Government and public amounted to at least rps. 120 million. These losses were directly attributable to the action of the dockworkers at Belawan.
3. Government attempts at breaking the dockworkers' sabotage action met with violent opposition. 150 workers, drafted for the night shifts in order to discharge Government rice at Belawan, met with violence. These non-union workers were intimidated and terrorized and, on 6 December 1950, bodily assaulted. The Mobile Brigade arrested several union members, including four of the union leaders.

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